



SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website  
**Mindfulness**  
**Starr King Church, Hayward, CA, Bev Powell**  
**Wednesday Afternoon Group, 12 Noon – 2 PM, January 24, 2018**

**Opening &  
Chalice Lighting**  
(1 min)

Each place is the right place--the place where I now am can be a sacred space.  
– *Ravi Ravindra*

**Sharing/Check-in**  
(3 min ea, 27 min)

*Take this time to share how you are spiritually, psychologically, emotionally and/or physically. We want to know how you are in this moment.*

**Quiet Reflection**  
(1 min)

*Take a moment to sit quietly and reflect upon your thoughts related to mindfulness.*

**Topic Readings**  
(5 min)

Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention on the present. When you're mindful, you carefully observe your thoughts and feelings without judging them good or bad. Instead of letting your life pass you by, mindfulness means living in the moment and awakening to your current experience, rather than dwelling on the past or anticipating the future. – *Psychology Today*

Don't just do something, sit there. – *(Buddist teacher) Sylvia Boorstein*

If we have too much stuff in our lives, our attention skips from one object to another without really enjoying anything. If we have too many activities, our attention jumps from past to future without settling into the present. If we have too many opinions, we end up thinking about how things should be without fully seeing how things are.

Practices that cultivate simplicity do two things. (1) They reduce the amount of stuff, activities or preferences so we have a better chance of settling into the present. They get the outward to resonate a little better with the happiness, joy and ease in our depths. And (2) they help us become more aware of our relationship to stuff, experience and thought. – *Doug Kraft, UUA staff*

She who is centered in the Tao  
can go where she wishes without danger.  
She perceives the universal harmony,  
even amid great pain,  
because she has found peace in her heart.

Music or the smell of good cooking  
may make people stop and enjoy.  
But words that point to the Tao  
seem monotonous and without flavor.  
When you look for it, there is nothing to see.  
When you listen for it, there is nothing to hear.  
When you use it, it is inexhaustible.  
– *Lao Tsu, Tao te Ching, chapter 35*

Essentially, meditation allows us to live in ways that are less automatic. This necessarily means less time spent worrying, ruminating, and trying to control things we can't control. It means we become less vulnerable to the throes of the fear-driven, older parts of our brains, and freer to use our newer and more sophisticated mental abilities: patience, compassion, acceptance and reason. – *David Cain*

	<p>Meditation practice isn't about trying to throw ourselves away and become something better. It's about befriending who we are already. – <i>Pema Chödrön</i></p> <p>You can destroy your now by worrying about tomorrow. – <i>Janis Joplin</i></p> <p>What you are thinking, what shape your mind is in, is what makes the greatest difference of all. – <i>Willie Mays</i></p> <p>The way to live in the present is to remember that 'This too shall pass.' When you experience joy, remembering that 'This too shall pass' helps you savor the here and now. When you experience pain and sorrow, remembering that 'This too shall pass' reminds you that grief, like joy, is only temporary. – <i>Joey Green</i></p> <p>Our minds are like crows. They pick up everything that glitters, no matter how uncomfortable our nests get with all that metal in them. – <i>Thomas Merton</i></p>
<b>Break/Quiet Contemplation (5 min)</b>	
<b>Sharing/Deep Listening (5 min ea, 45 min)</b>	<p><i>Speak about this topic in any way that is comfortable to you. If you choose to use the questions, focus on just one or two, as this will allow you to explore the topic in more depth.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mindfulness seems to mean different things to different people. For some it is sitting in silence for 5, 15, or 50 minutes. For another person, it could be paying complete attention to the present moment, deliberately doing one thing at a time. For someone else, it might be walking a labyrinth, or performing some ritual that enhances contemplation of patterns and things larger than ourselves. What does mindfulness mean to you?</li> <li>• Have you tried to meditate? If yes, what is your experience?</li> <li>• Unitarian Universalism's Fourth Principle affirms the value of a "free and responsible search for truth and meaning. Do you see meditation and other methods of mindfulness as a means to finding "truth and meaning?"</li> <li>• Is Mindfulness something you cultivate in your life? How do you practice it?</li> <li>• Is Mindfulness a luxury or a necessity? Or something else?</li> </ul>
<b>Open Reflection (20 min)</b>	<i>This is a time to supportively respond to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared. Please try to respond to others without judgment. Please attempt to include everyone in the conversation and give reticent speakers "room" to participate.</i>
<b>Housekeeping (12 min)</b>	<i>1. Discuss 2018 service projects. 2. Now that Mary has departed from the group, discuss opening the group to new member.</i>
<b>Announcements (1 min)</b>	<i>Next Session: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 – <b>Dreams</b></i>
<b>Likes &amp; Wishes (2 min)</b>	<i>What did you appreciate about today's session – in yourself, in others, in the whole? What would you like to see change in the future?</i>
<b>Closing Words/ Extinguishing the Chalice (1 min)</b>	<p>Why should we live in such a hurry and waste of time?  I do not wish to live what is not life, living is so dear,  I wish to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life,  If it proves to be mean, then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world;  Or if it is sublime, to know it by experience, and to be able to give a true account of it. – <i>Henry David Thoreau (#660 in <b>Singing the Living Tradition</b>)</i></p>